

# Emergency Response News



June 2003

## **IDEM oversees cleanup of hazardous materials following train derailment in Vigo County**

The Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) and other agencies responded to a multiple railcar wreck involving a fire and a cargo of hazardous materials near Atherton in Vigo County.

On June 2, the State Fire Marshal's Office contacted an IDEM On Scene Coordinator to ask for the agency's assistance at the cleanup of a train derailment involving 47 cars. Twelve of the railcars had landed in a farm field.

The agencies were concerned about a railcar loaded with nitrocellulose, a flammable and potentially explosive solid.

The Sandcut Voluntary Fire Department extinguished two separate fires in railcars, which involved vodka and tires.

Firefighters reported approximately eighty barrels of nitrocellulose had broken open and spilled onto farmland and railroad ballast.

Responders conducted a field investigation. Once it was determined the canisters containing nitrocellulose had been stabilized and were safe to handle, a cleanup plan was implemented.

The railroad company hired a contractor to conduct a cleanup under IDEM's oversight. The contractor staged water at the site to continually wet and stabilize the opened and spilled containers of nitrocellulose and over packed them into steel drums. This hazardous waste was transported to a regulated facility for disposal.

The cleanup also included removing and properly disposing of the train's wreckage and spilled cargo of vodka, corn oil, batteries and plastic pellets.

On June 4, the cleanup of nitrocellulose had been completed to IDEM's satisfaction to be protective of human health and the environment.



### **Site Snapshot**

#### IDEM action:

Investigated and oversaw cleanup of hazardous materials after a train derailment

#### Location:

Rural Atherton, Vigo County

#### Primary substance of concern:

Nitrocellulose

#### Environmental threat:

Potential flammable and explosive hazardous material

For further information, contact staff at the following phone numbers or at IDEM's toll free phone number, (800) 451-6027:

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